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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As a computer professional who deals with many platforms in the multimedia space, the behavior of Microsoft is, in my view, highly anti competitive. The entire industry outside of Microsoft understands that products based on interoperable standards is the key to developing better technologies. All developers may contribute to technical advances as long as the platform remains agnostic, or at least not hostile to a chosen technology. Individuals and companies can compete on a fairly level playing field with the knowledge that users can take advantage of technical advances. Everyone can contribute to our technical landscape and the consumer will see the benefit.

Unfortunately, Microsoft sees every technology it doesn't own as competition that must die. To that end, they have the power to manipulate the platform [which should be standards agnostic] to cripple or disable the software offerings of their perceived competitors. Microsoft does understand that new technologies not originated by them have a market and they will offer a [generally] crudely inferior substitute for the competing software, thus redirecting the channel of demand to go to Microsoft's door, rendering competing technologies irrelevant and damaging the ability of the user to obtain the performance they seek.

New technologies are either purchased by Microsoft or killed off. If a cross platform technology is purchased or co-opted by Microsoft, most of the cross platform functionality is stripped away to ensure the dominance of Windows and the irrelevance of anything else. If a technology cannot be purchased by Microsoft, a simple change to their operating system or the [now] bundled browser will ensure their version of a similar technology will be as good as it gets.

Microsoft is moving away from interoperable standards as fast as they can. They have already significantly damaged the ability to use technologies like QuickTime, the crown jewel of multimedia, and are working to replace it with the laughable Windows Media Player. Since Microsoft's software integrates very well within Windows, whatever media formats Windows Media Player cannot handle, Internet Explorer or Windows itself will take over thus requiring the complete Windows environment to do things formerly done with the highly agile cross platform QuickTime. As a result, developers write software that speaks specifically to Windows integration which slowly pushes better technologies aside.

Since Microsoft makes it very clear which technologies will succeed and fail on the Windows platform, developers have no choice but to develop to the system that ensures success. In effect, Microsoft is dictating

what technologies developers may and may not use, not based on any written orders but on Microsoft's actions designed to pave the road to their sole success. Developers who tow the Microsoft line are handsomely rewarded. Developers who do not will find themselves struggling to open avenues of opportunity. This is technical censorship to the benefit of one company and at the expense of the better world it could be.

The Microsoft .NET strategy is intended to render the Internet useless for anyone not using a complete Microsoft sanctioned technology chain. Their goal is for anyone not using Microsoft products to see a blank screen on the Internet which would be a tragedy beyond belief. They are using this precious time while the courts are tied up with delays to entrench these Microsoft specific technologies and entrap millions of individual and enterprise users in their net.

Don't let this happen. It is up to the courts to do the right thing. Break Microsoft into pieces where each division will contribute the good parts of their software to a standards based, interoperable world. Deny Microsoft the ability to leverage Windows to force the rise of their own products at the expense of better technologies and better user experiences. Microsoft will perform better as a company and will serve the industry better if they broken up and are forced to become less self interested. Otherwise, we are doomed to sink further into a mediocre technology landscape.

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Famous Last Words: "The Web is exciting for two reasons. One, it's ubiquitous. Two, I don't think Microsoft will figure out a way to own it." - Steve Jobs